

FIRST RECORD OF *CHARAXES LATONA* BUTLER (LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE) FROM AUSTRALIA

By S. J. Johnson and M. De Baar

Oonoonba Veterinary Laboratory, P.O. Box 1085, Townsville, 4810
and
25 Irwin Terrace, Oxley, Brisbane, 4075

Abstract

Three specimens of *Charaxes latona* Butler (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae) are recorded from Cape York, northern Queensland, these being the first Australian record for this butterfly. The subspecific status of the Australian specimens is uncertain.

Introduction

Charaxes latona Butler is a large, fast flying, and conspicuous nymphalid butterfly which is widely distributed within the Australian region. It occurs on Bachan, Halmahera, and Obi Islands in the Moluccas, the Aru Islands, mainland West Irian and Papua New Guinea, Fergusson and Goodenough Islands in the D'Entrecasteux group, the Bismark Archipelago, and Bougainville in the Solomon Islands. D'Abbrera, (1978) recognises 13 subspecies from the region.

In June and July, 1978 three males were taken, and others observed flying, in rain forest at Iron Range, Cape York Peninsula, a well known area which has been subjected to extensive collecting in recent years (Monteith and Hancock, 1977).

Material

2 ♂, Iron Range, 29.vi.1978, 7.vii.1978 M. De Baar (in De Baar Collection);
1 ♂, Iron Range, 3.vii.1978, D. Washbourne (in S. J. Johnson collection).

Discussion

The adult males taken, and those observed, were flying along the margins of rain forest particularly on the summits of ridges and hills in the area adjacent to Mt. Lamond. The flight behaviour was very similar to that of the closely related *Polyura pyrrhus* (Fabricius) which was flying with *C. latona*. Both species exhibited aggressive territorial behaviour. They alighted on leaves usually six metres or higher above the ground, and rested in a characteristic head down position with wings held erect over the body.

The Australian specimens appear to differ from mainland New Guinea specimens in the width of the dark margins of the wings. The fore wing dorsal dentate submarginal band on the Australian specimens is less developed and further from the dark margin than in specimens from mainland New Guinea (compare Fig. 1 with Fig. 2). On the hind wing, the dorsal submarginal spot between CuA_1 and CuA_2 is poorly developed in the Australian specimens compared to New Guinea specimens.

There appears to be no significant difference between the underside patterns of the Australian specimens and those of the nearest New Guinea subspecies. Underside pattern and hind wing tail development in New Guinea



Figs 1-2. *Charaxes latona* Butler. (1) ♂ from Iron Range, 3.vii.1978, D. Washbourne; (2) ♂ from Gabensis, Morobe Dist., Papua New Guinea, 10.iii.1973, D. Sands (Australian National Insect Collection). Uppersides at left, undersides at right; slightly larger than natural size.

populations varies considerably between specimens from the same locality over a period of two months (Fenner, pers. comm.).

Owing to the uncertainty of the subspecific status of available New Guinea material and the scarcity of Australian specimens, we have decided to leave the subspecific status of the Australian specimens unresolved.

Acknowledgements

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References

- D'Abbrera, B. 1978. *Butterflies of the Australian Region*. Second Edition. Lansdowne, Melbourne. 415 pp.
 Monteith, G. B. and Hancock, D. L., 1977. Range extensions and notable records for butterflies of Cape York Peninsula, Australia. *Aust. ent. Mag.* 4(2): 21-38.

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Compiled by M. S. Moulds

ALLEN, R.

1976. Lions in our bushland. *Bendigo Nat.* 7(2): 38-39, illustr.

Neuroptera: *Glenoleon pulchellus* from Bendigo district (popular style notes)

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1977. Darling Range Branch. Report on Dryandra camp out - October 8-10. *Naturalist News* November, 1977: 4-6.

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Lepidoptera: *Geltoneura minyas*, *G. klugi*, *Precis villida*, *Vanessa cardui*

Note: *Naturalist News* is the newsletter of the Western Australia Nat. Club.

1978. Managing cotton pests. *Rural Res. CSIRO* 100: 13-18, illustr.

Note correction to photo caption on p.15, "right" should read "left" and vice versa

1978. Curious Australian cricket founds new family. *New Sci.* 79(1119): 686, illustr.

Also mentions Formicidae: *Nothomymecia macrops*

1978. Building an insect data bank. *Ecos* 18: 24-25, illustr.

1978. Mounting a mammoth insect collection. *Rur. Res. CSIRO* 101: 2, illustr.

1979. Glenaladale excursion. See Le SOUËF, J. C., 1979

1979. Butterflies at Lockyer. In February outing. *Toowoomba Field nat. Club Newsl.* 303: 2.

Lepidoptera: *Euploea core corinna*, *Acraea andromacha andromacha*

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Hemiptera: Woolly scale, Nepidae sp.

Odonata: *Diplacodes bipunctata*

1979. Insects help to clear weed-infested waters. *Ecos* 20: 3-7, illustr.

Coleoptera: Curculionidae: *Nechoetina eichorniae*; Chrysomelidae: alligator weed

Lepidoptera: *Sameodes alboguttalis* flea beetle.

1979. Watch out for winged pests from our north. *Ecos* 20: 11-16, illustr.

Diptera: Calliphoridae: *Chrysomya bezziana*; Tephritidae: *Dacus dorsalis*, *D. cucurbitae*

Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae: *Junonia erigone*

Hemiptera: Aphididae: *Therioaphis trifolii*, *Acyrtosiphon kondoi*